

The foraminous imprinting member may comprise a reinforcing structure having a patterned framework disposed on the paper web contacting surface. Alternately, the imprinting member may comprise interwoven yarns. The second lamina is a dewatering felt composed of a secondary base with nonwoven batting joined thereto. The second lamina has a first surface juxtaposed with and attached to the second surface of the first lamina such that the batting extends through the first lamina.

DRAWINGS:

The Examiner has rejected the drawings because of the following informality: Figure 1 and Figure 2 are both labeled Figure 2. A sketch in permanent ink showing the proposed change accompanies this response. Formal drawings incorporating this change will be submitted at a later date.

OBJECTIONS:

The Examiner objected to Claims 1-8 because the word "belt" in line 1 of Claim 1 should be lower case. Claim 1 has been amended accordingly.

35 U.S.C. §112 REJECTIONS:

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner expressed concern that the phrases beginning with the word "whereby" in the last lines of Claims 1, 9, and 16 are indefinite in scope and requested replacing "whereby" with "wherein". Per this amendment, Claims 1, 9, and 16 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's request.

The Examiner also found Claim 4 to be indefinite because it recites the limitation "hydraulic connection" which has the accepted meaning "operated by the movement or force of water." The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Although the Examiner provides an accepted definition, Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary provides an alternate definition for hydraulic as "relating to water or other liquid in motion." Thus, one skilled in the art would interpret "hydraulic connection" as used by the Applicant to mean "a connection providing for the movement of water therebetween."

35 U.S.C. 102(b) REJECTIONS:

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Trokhan, et al. (5,556,509).

In order to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim. MPEP §2131. "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." MPEP §2131 citing Verdegaa Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

Trokhan, et al. discloses a single lamina comprising a dewatering felt composed of a batt of natural or synthetic fibers joined, such as by needling, to a support structure formed of woven filaments. (Column 7, lines 38-40). The dewatering felt has a web patterning layer joined to a web facing surface of the felt. The web patterning layer preferably comprises a liquid photosensitive resin deposited on the web facing surface of the felt so that a portion of the patterning layer penetrates the web facing surface and is securely bonded thereto by radiation curing. (Column 7, lines 16-20).

Unlike Trokhan (5,556,509), the Applicant's claimed papermaking belt comprises a laminate of two separate laminae joined in a face-to-face relationship. The first lamina comprises a reinforcing structure with a patterned framework disposed thereon. The second lamina comprises a secondary base with a batting joined thereto. Accordingly, Trokhan does not teach every element of the Applicant's claimed invention, specifically, the first lamina comprising the reinforcing structure with the patterned framework disposed thereon. Therefore, the Applicant's invention is not anticipated by Trokhan.

35 U.S.C. 103(a) REJECTION:

The Examiner Rejected Claims 9-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Trokhan (5,565,509) in view of Trokhan (5,624,790). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

According to the MPEP § 2143, to establish the prima facie case of obviousness, the prior art relied upon coupled with the knowledge generally available in the art at the time of the invention must contain some suggestion or incentive that would have motivated the skilled artisan to modify a reference or combine references.

As previously explained, Trokhan (5,565,509) discloses a single lamina papermaking belt comprising a dewatering felt with a web patterning layer disposed on the web contacting surface of the felt. Trokhan (5,624,790) discloses a backside textured papermaking belt comprising a reinforcing structure and a patterned framework on a web contacting surface of

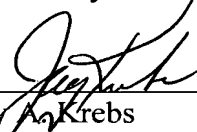
the belt. The patterned frameworks on the web contacting surfaces of the belts disclosed in each of the two references produce structured paper.

Trokhan (5,565,509) neither discloses nor provides the necessary motivation or incentive to combine the single lamina dewatering felt in a face-to-face relationship with a second lamina to form a laminate, much less combine the dewatering felt with a second lamina comprising a backside textured papermaking belt. As explained above, the web patterning layer on the single lamina dewatering felt of Trokhan (5,565,509) produces structured paper. Consequently, there is no motivation to combine the dewatering felt of Trokhan (5,565,509) with the backside textured belt of Trokhan (5,624,790) in order to make use of the belts patterned framework.

Accordingly, the Applicant's invention is patentable over Trokhan (5,565,509) in view Trokhan (5,624,790).

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-25 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cincinnati, Ohio
February 1, 2000

